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E A S T G E R M A N Y

17 October 1961

OPEN LETTER ADDRESSED TO FULBRIGHT

East Berlin Domestic Service in German 1810 GMT 16 October 1961--L

(Commentary of the day: Open letter addressed by commentator  
Wolfgang Gaertner to Senator William Fulbright)

(Text) Highly Esteemed Mr. Fulbright: I have a mental picture of what will happen when the clerk of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate places this letter before you. It will be a letter from an East German communist. You will not be so much disturbed by the "East German"--we will talk about that later--as by the "communist."

Unless its ideology were to be discussed, or social orders, no common basis could be found by us. How could I understand you, since you are among the signatories of the Southern Manifesto, that manifesto of whites which forbids Negroes of Little Rock, the capital of your home state, Arkansas, to attend secondary schools, to acquire for themselves the fundamentals necessary for a life fit for human beings. How could I, who just about a year ago found in four African states the confirmation of the viciousness of the racial theory, understand you.

But I am not concerned with questions of social order and ideology. I am convinced that Joe and Betsy of Little Rock will one day have the same status as white children. What I am concerned with is that they remain alive at all, the children of Little Rock, of Duesseldorf, of Dresden, and of Leningrad. Surely, the point now is that the world, where Christians and atheists, communists and capitalists--that is the world--are living, is not to burst into thousands of atomic particles. It is the question of war and peace.

At this point we seem to be in agreement, if I have rightly understood the speeches which you, senator, have made during recent years--you, the U.S. senator, and I, the GDR journalist.

We are in agreement that there must not be shouting but negotiations, that understanding of the realities of this world must be gained, that it is best to talk to each other. It would be most sensible, of course, to speak man to man. Perhaps your next journey to Germany will take you further east than Bonn. It would be a pleasure for me to acquaint you with realities east of the Elbe, with the factories we have built, with the spirit that animates the people working the machines. I am

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convinced that we would have little difficulty in understanding each other, because these days the language differences, whether they be English, Russian, or German, are not the point; the point is that human languages should continue to be spoken.

I need not tell you, senator, you who are the older man, how much this question of peace or war depends on the final, entire influence of man, the more so if a man bears as much responsibility as you do as chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee for Foreign Relations. Nor need I tell you how useful it is to know in this matter the right point of view, to know who in the world is the best ally with one's own point of view. And yet, this is the very point I want to make to you in my letter.

You see, such an action, which suddenly brings home international realities and thereby helps to disentangle confusion, was the action of 13 August. We put the warmongers of West Germany and West Berlin behind barbed wire. That they screamed murder merely confirmed how right we were. You, senator, prior to 13 August said over U.S. television: "I do not understand why the East Germans are not closing their frontier, because I hold that they have the right to close it." You, as an Oxford scholar, as a professor, as the holder of several honorary degrees, and, of course, as an expert of standing on foreign affairs, are surely better aware of the importance of international law, of treaties and agreements, than the gentlemen of the Bonn Foreign Office, who, under Ribbentrop, have learned only to violate law and treaties and agreements.

And did you think, then, when Herr von Brentano immediately inquired of you, whether the above-quoted remark might be meant seriously? If your secretary failed to pass this interpellation on to you, I must congratulate you on your staff.

But because it is always a good thing to know where someone stands, and to know one's enemies accurately, I permit myself to quote to you a few differences made to you at the time in West Germany. "Fulbright is a bit confused." That is the weakest reference. Brandt spoke about something "morally untenable," something "unbelievable," and said "Fulbright has no (word indistinct) and so forth. Do you understand, senator, that you and I, despite the great differences in regard to religion, have in common, I suppose, the knowledge that peace is desirable. That it cannot be localized at a river, the Elbe for instance. That the endangering of peace menaces Little Rock just as much as it menaces Berlin and Dresden and Düsseldorf, as it does for you and me.

And we are surely in agreement that something must be done for peace, and we think and we are doing the right thing.

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Since you, senator, and the GDR Government, on account of the measures of 13 August, were equally abused by West German politicians and journalists, should this not give food for thought? Of course, you know it, but I still permit myself to confirm it to you: One single man who is right, will not be overthrown by the howling of a pack of wolves. Were matters different when you, senator, in the summer of 1960, a pack howling at your heels, put truth high when you said: Apart from the lunacy of a preventive war there is nothing that can be more dangerous than resumption of the U-2 flights over the USSR. The U-2 incident and West Berlin are parallel cases. The howling, then and now, comes from the same muzzles. At that time, you, senator, were one of the few to have the courage to uphold truth and you were praised for it by the public of the world and by your President.

Speaking for myself, it gave me hope at the time, when U.S. news agencies reported that you belonged to the small team of the new President Kennedy. Your President has thereby given a hope to the world. And let me say this about you: At a time when it took courage to do so, you stood up against your fellow countryman McCarthy; you were there when the policy of Dulles, the exponent of brinkmanship, was buried, and I found in one of your speeches that you have a slight notion of where the springs of the new time are to be found. From the final debate of Congress in August 1958 I quote: "People received from Dulles what they wanted: A cheap foreign policy that concludes a peace here, proclaims a doctrine there, and sends a few guns to a third country." They charged the Eisenhower administration with having had contempt for the people, but you said they had been given the freedom not to have to think any more.

If you, senator, have such a high opinion of the people, who in West Germany are called the "street," that you want them to think, it will interest you to know that in the program declaration of our State Council Chairman Walter Ulbricht it was laid down: To think is the first civic duty. There, too, we are in agreement. The times are such that what unites should come before what divides. You are a man with bold ideas, say U.S. papers, and our time needs men with bold ideas, for the West must rethink to get out of the cul-de-sac. We are glad that in the United States the number of people who do so is growing daily.

You once said: The question is that of a plain situation in West Berlin. It is the question of forbidding the Bundeswehr to be equipped with atomic weapons: it is a question of creating a zone of lessened tension in central Europe. Atomic armament in West Germany--this, senator, is the essence on which the problem of peace and war are turning. On 13 August we ordered these atomic warriors in West Germany to stay within their own

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confines; You said we were right. You, senator, and I, know the dangerous nature of West German militarism. You too, will not be able to fight it with words alone. West German militarism must be further confined by a peace treaty. For this, deeds and action are needed.

Only the other week Herr von Brentano said that Bonn would not give up atomic weapons. Thereby he has slapped your face. You can see that the danger threatens both of us.

The thoughts of the GDR on these problems you will find in the German peace plan, in your German (word indistinct). Read the two together--your thoughts and our policy--and you will find that you will act in the interests of the U.S. people if you influence the decisions to be taken by your government in the interest of the German people.

Highly esteemed Mr. Fulbright, I am aware that your predecessor as chairman of the important Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Green, retired from politics at the age of 91. I wish you a policy which will insure for you the same great age.

Your Goetz Gaertner, Radio GDR.

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GHANAIAN DELEGATION--A Ghanaian Government delegation arrived in Berlin by air 16 October for a stay of several days in the GDR. The delegation is led by Krobo Edusei, minister of light and heavy industries, and includes L.R. Abavana, minister of agriculture. (East Berlin ADN 1232 GMT 16 October 1961--L)

HAGER STATEMENT--Prof. Kurt Hager, secretary of the SED Central Committee, pointed out in a press statement 16 October that the building of communism in the USSR is highly beneficial for all countries of the socialist camp. Thanks to the ever-close economic cooperation between the fraternal countries, the progress of Soviet economy is exerting increasing influence on the development of the socialist countries. Therefore (words indistinct) the building of communism in the USSR fully accords with the interests of the whole socialist camp. (Text) (East Berlin Deutschlandsender 0900 GMT 16 October 1961--L)

BERLIN AIRPORT--French authorities in West Berlin rejected the suggestion of the West Berlin Senate that the Tegel airport in West Berlin be enlarged. The French airport administration rejected the Senate plans without further discussion. British reports say that civil air traffic to West Berlin will be reduced considerably. (East Berlin Domestic Television 1846 GMT 13 October 1961--G)